

# **State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)**

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## **Situation Report for August 30, 2007**

(issued @ 1500 hrs.)



# **2007 FIRES**

### **Report Includes:**

- Background Information
  - Fire Restrictions & Closures
  - Air Quality
  - Road Closures/Travel Restrictions
- Current Incident Situation
- New Large Fires
- Weather
- State Declarations
- Local & Tribal Declarations
- Local Government & Tribal Emergency Operations
- Requests for State Financial Assistance
  - Fire Management Assistance Grants
  - EMAC Resources Committed
  - Summary of State Resources Committed

### **Important Websites:**

State of Montana Fire Information:

<http://mt.gov/fire.asp>

National Interagency Fire Center

[http://www.nifc.gov/fire\\_info/nfn.htm](http://www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm)

Northern Rockies Coordination Center

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/>

Inciweb -- Incident Information System

<http://www.inciweb.org/state/27/>

Being prepared: [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)

**\*\*\* Unless there are significant developments in the wildfire situation in Montana, tomorrow's Situation Report will be the last one issued by the State Emergency Coordination Center.**

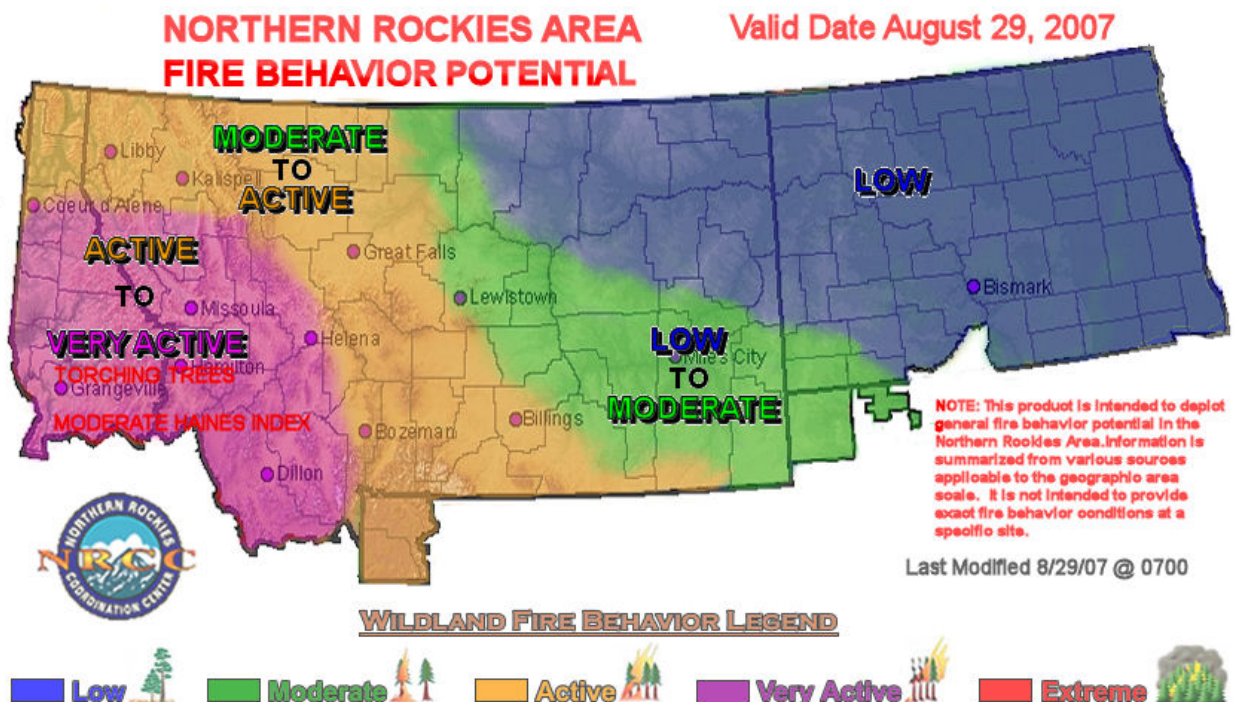
### **I. Background Information**

Since June, hot and dry weather has dominated the region creating very high to extreme fire conditions. Fire Indices are at an all time high while fuel moistures are low. Accompanying the high indices are weather patterns that have set the conditions for lightning and lightning caused starts. High pressure weather patterns over the region are responsible for the high temperatures and little to no moisture. Occasional cold fronts push through the region causing severe lightning storms that ignite wildfires. Rain has accompanied some of these fronts but a return to a high pressure system tends to mitigate most of the moisture received.

### ***Long Range Predictions***

Above normal significant fire potential has been forecasted for most of the Area during August. Fuel moisture conditions are expected to improve during the September

through November time period except for eastern Montana. In many areas across western Montana and northern Idaho, downed dead woody fuel moistures are drier than normal and Energy Release Component indices are running near or above record levels and well ahead of normal for this time of year. The Climate Prediction Center's forecast for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation during August, especially over western portions of the Area... has proven to be true. Wind events were frequent during August as well. Abundant fine fuels have cured rapidly in eastern Montana and increased the probability for large fire problems during August and into the fall months.



## Predictions for Thursday, 30 Aug 2007

Synopsis: The upper level ridge will continue to build across the Geographic Area bringing a return to well above normal temperatures to most locations. Valley inversions will break by early afternoon allowing smoke to partially disperse as the atmosphere becomes rather unstable. This instability with the addition of high level moisture will produce some isolated dry thunderstorms across Idaho and far western Montana with some local erratic winds near storms.

Fire Weather Impacts: Although the general winds should be light, afternoon humidity will become rather low across Idaho and much of western and central Montana. Also, expect moderate to high Haines values over central Idaho and western Montana to increase fire activity.

Large Fire Risk: Will be very high due to extreme fuel dryness, especially west of the Divide with the risk of new lightning ignitions.

**Fire Contracting:** Inquiries regarding contracting fire equipment and other fire resources should be directed to the interested party's local dispatch center or Geographic Area Coordination Center see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/agree-contract/signup.html>

**Fire Restrictions & Closures:** Portions of the state are currently under Stage I or Stage II Fire Restrictions. For definitions of these restrictions, see:

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagel.pdf>

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/stagell.pdf>

**Fire Restrictions in Effect** (for specific areas):

<http://www.mt.blm.gov/fire/restrictions/index.html>

**Air Quality & Smoke:** The Montana Department of Environmental Quality issues a daily forecast and discussion of potential smoke impacts throughout the state. The forecast can be accessed at <http://www.deq.state.mt.us/fireupdates/index.asp>.

**Road Closures & Travel Restrictions:**

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/reports/alerts.shtml>

**Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Emergency Rules:**

<http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/emergency/index.asp>

**Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks**

[Current Fire Restrictions](#)

[Drought & Fire Updates](#)

[Drought & Fire News](#)

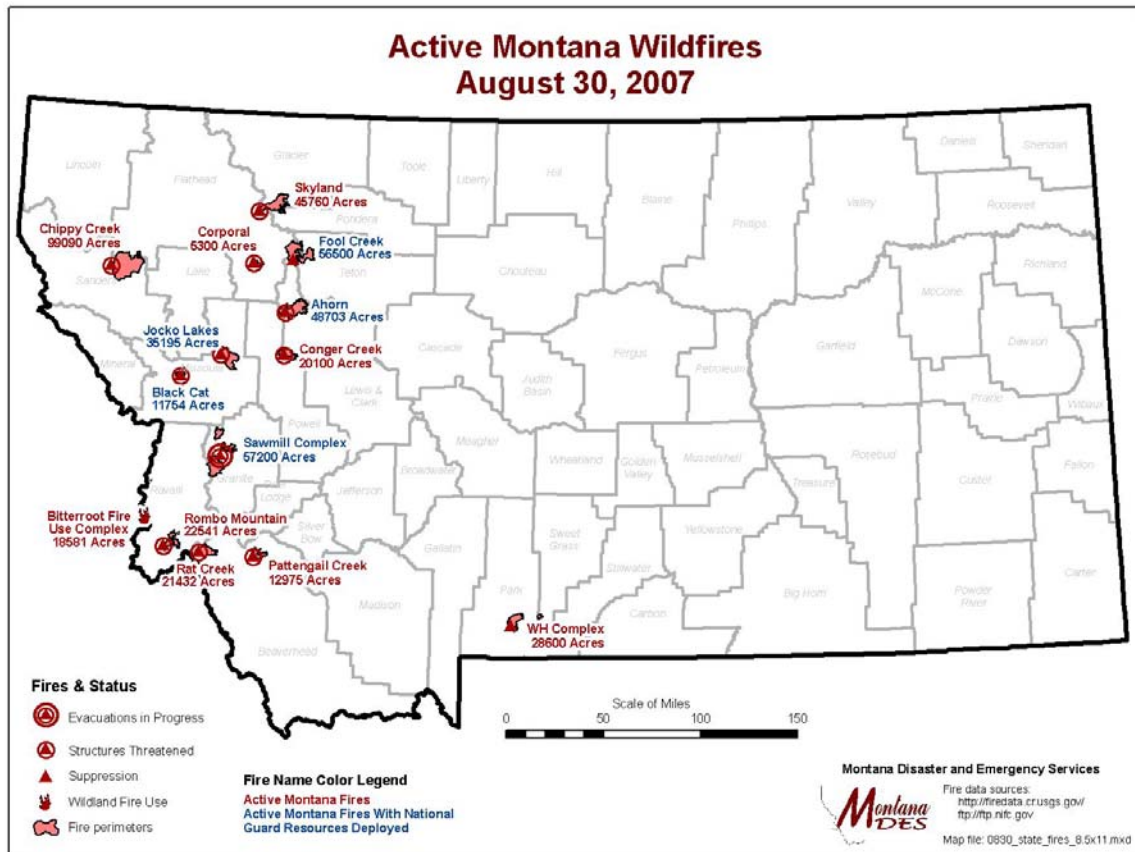
**Department of Revenue**

<http://mt.gov/revenue/forindividuals/taxrelieffordisaster.asp>

**Department of Agriculture**

<http://agr.mt.gov/crops/hayFirst.asp>

**II. Current Incident Situation** - Incidents listed according to current NRCG priority. (This report includes summary information for Montana fires that are currently greater than 100 acres in size. Fires are dropped from this report once they reach 100% containment.) The following URL is a link to maps of fire perimeters for the several of the incidents: [http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire\\_Perimeter\\_Maps.asp](http://dma.mt.gov/des/Fire_Perimeter_Maps.asp).



Currently assigned to Montana incidents are:

Type 1 IMT's	-	3
Type 2 IMT's	-	3
Fire Use Management Teams	-	3

Throughout the week, many of the large wildland fire incidents in the Northern Rockies Geographic Area have begun transitioning from Type I or II incidents to Type III organizations.

Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5
National Preparedness Level = 4

**Sawmill Complex** (4 fires) is located on the Lolo, Bitterroot and Beaverhead – Deerlodge National Forests. The four fires in this complex extend from approximately 22 miles SE of Missoula to an area approximately 23 miles WSW of Phillipsburg, MT. The complex **acreage is 57,029** and includes the Sawmill Creek, Wyman #2, Fisher Point, and the Signal Rock 07 fires. **Containment is 22%**. Angell's Type 2 IMT is in command. Personnel assigned: **660**. Numerous residences and other structures remain threatened. Use Restrictions and Road Closures are in effect within the Rock Creek drainage. Evacuations are in effect along the Willow Cr Road.

**Jocko Lakes** started on CSKT lands (Flathead Agency, BIA), twenty-six miles NE of Missoula; 8 miles W of Seeley Lake. Hoff's Type 1 IMT is assigned. The Jocko Lakes Fire is **35,195 acres and 56% contained**. Personnel assigned: **855**. Residences and commercial properties remain threatened. Structures (8) have been lost, including 1 primary residence and 7 outbuildings.

**Rombo Mountain** is located in the Bitterroot NF. The fire is located eighteen miles south of Darby, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT is assigned (also managing Rat Creek and Pattengail Creek). Estimated size is **22,541 acres** with 15% containment. Personnel assigned: **282**. Residences, Painted Rocks State Park and other commercial property remain threatened. **Highway 93 and West Fork Road are open**. Existing Stage I Pre-Evacuation Notices/Alerts remain in effect. Also, the existing area closure order remains in effect.

**BH Fire** is 36 miles southwest of Darby. Perkin's FUMT is managing the BH Fire (under the umbrella of the Bitterroot WFU Complex). The fire is **693 acres with no report on containment**. Personnel assigned: **not reported**. Cause: Lightning. Intermittent closure of Magruder Corridor Road due to fire activity.

**Bitterroot Fire Use Complex** (12 fires) is 15 air miles west of Darby. Perkins's FUMT is assigned. The Bitterroot Fire Use Complex is **18,581 acres**. Personnel assigned: **44**. Cause: Lightning. Structures are threatened. One structure was destroyed. Magruder Corridor Road is intermittently closed.

**Chippy Creek** is located forty-two miles southwest of Kalispell, and 24 miles N of Thompson Falls, MT (Northwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC). Secrest's Type 2 IMT is assigned. Size is **99,090 acres with 85% containment**. Personnel assigned: **664**. Numerous homes remain threatened. The Hubbard dam road remains closed to the general public, because of fire traffic.

**Ahorn Fire** on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Lewis and Clark County is being managed by Lineback's FUMT (also managing the Fool Creek Fire). Current size is estimated at **48,703 acres and is 15% contained**. Personnel Assigned: **187**. Evacuations are in effect. Structure protection for residences and guest ranches in the Benchmark, Gibson, and Sun River Canyon areas continue.

**Fool Creek** on the Lewis and Clark and Flathead National Forests, approximately 30 miles NW of Choteau. Fire is now **56,500 acres with 20% containment**. Personnel assigned: **136**. Lineback's FUMT is assigned (also managing the Ahorn Fire). Several outbuildings, including a ski resort remain threaten (7 outbuildings have burned).

**Skyland** is located on the Flathead NF near Summit. Heintz's Type 2 IMT has transitioned with Stanley's Type 3 team. This morning Stanley's team has assumed command. The Skyland Fire is **45,760 acres with 75% containment**. Personnel assigned: **258**. Two structures are confirmed lost.

**WH Complex** – These fires are located 27 miles S of Livingston, and 10 miles SE of Emigrant, MT. Total size of the complex is **28,600 acres with 70% containment**. Bonefeld's FUMT is assigned. Personnel Assigned: **127**.

**Black Cat** is located between Highway 93 and Mill Creek, approximately 2 miles SW of Evaro, Montana. Martin's Type 1 IMT is transitioning to Berger's Type 3 organization. Transfer of command is scheduled for 18:00 hours this evening. Current size is **11,754 acres with 95% containment**. Approximately **325** personnel are assigned. A total of seven (7) unoccupied structures were lost, but no primary residences were reported as destroyed. Highway 93 is opened.

**Rat Creek** is located on the Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF, twenty-five miles west of Wisdom, MT. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain Fire and Pattengail Creek) is assigned. The fire is now **21,432 acres with 15% containment**. Personnel assigned: **263**. Structures are threatened.

**Pattengail Creek** on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, 10 miles northeast of Wisdom. The Pattengail Creek Fire is **12,975 acres and 15% contained**. Quisenberry's Type 1 IMT (also managing the Rombo Mountain and Rat Creek Fires) is assigned; with **7** personnel. 12 structures along Highway 43 (west side of the fire in the area of Doolittle Creek and Squaw Creek) are threatened. **This fire is now in monitoring status.**

**Conger Creek** is on the Lolo National Forest, approximately 20 miles north of Ovando. The fire is now **20,100 acres, with no report on containment**. Seielstad (Type 3 IC) is assigned with **18** personnel. 13 outbuildings are threatened. **Gradual demobilization to begin 8/30.**

**Calbick** is located on the Flathead National Forest, approximately 20 miles South of East Glacier, MT. A Type 4 organization (Nichols) is assigned. Personnel assigned: **6**. Cause: Lightning. The Fire is approximately **867 acres in size, with no report on containment**. No structures are currently threatened, but structure protection measures (for 10 outbuildings) are continuing in the Schafer Meadows area.

**Corporal Fire** is 18 miles east of Swan Lake on the Flathead NF. The Corporal Fire is **5,300 acres with no report on containment**. Oliver (Type 3 IC) is assigned. Personnel assigned: **42**. Cause: Lightning. Structures at Spotted Bear are threatened.

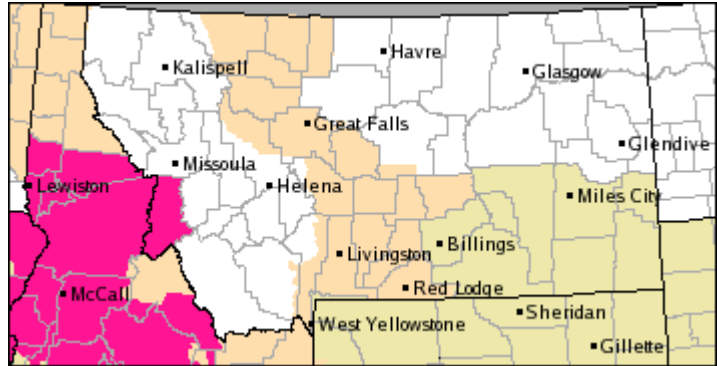
**\* There were no NEW LARGE FIRES (or emerging Extended Attack Fires over 100 acres in size) reported in Montana yesterday.**

### **III. Weather - Red Flag Warnings and/or Fire Weather Watches**

#### **Red Flag Warning today!**

The National Weather Service in Missoula has issued a Red Flag Warning... in effect from noon MDT today to midnight tonight. The earlier Fire Weather Watch is no longer in effect.

Subtropical moisture in the mid levels of the atmosphere will move north through the northern great basin and into central Idaho and southwest Montana today. The atmosphere over the Palouse/Hells Canyon.. Clearwater/Nez Perce and Bitterroot districts will destabilize during the afternoon leading to the development of thunderstorms. Due to persistent dry conditions in the lower atmosphere... these thunderstorms are expected to be dry with little... if any precipitation. Frequent lightning and gusty winds will be the main threat from these storms.



#### **Fire Weather Watch tomorrow!**

The National Weather Service in Great Falls has issued a Fire Weather Watch in effect through Aug 31 2007... for Fire Weather Zones 112...114...and 117. The Watch is for low relative humidity and potentially gusty winds across portions of central and north central Montana.

Dry and very warm conditions will develop over the fire districts during this afternoon and continue through Friday. Afternoon relative humidity will decrease below 20 percent at many locations during this time. Isolated thunderstorm activity is expected this evening over high terrain of the southern districts... with increased thunderstorm potential during Friday afternoon and evening. Gusty winds are likely to coincide with thunderstorm activity on Friday...prompting the need for a fire weather watch. A cold front is anticipated between Friday late evening and Saturday morning...with higher relative humidity...cooler temperatures...and possible wetting rains over the western districts.

#### **Definitions of a Fire Weather Watch and a Red Flag Warning:**

A fire weather watch or red flag warning is issued when the combination of dry fuels and weather conditions support extreme fire danger. These products are written for land and fire managers to highlight the increased fire danger.

A fire weather watch is issued up to 72 hours before the above conditions are expected to occur.

A red flag warning is issued when the conditions above are occurring or expected to occur within the next 24 hours. <http://www.weather.gov/>

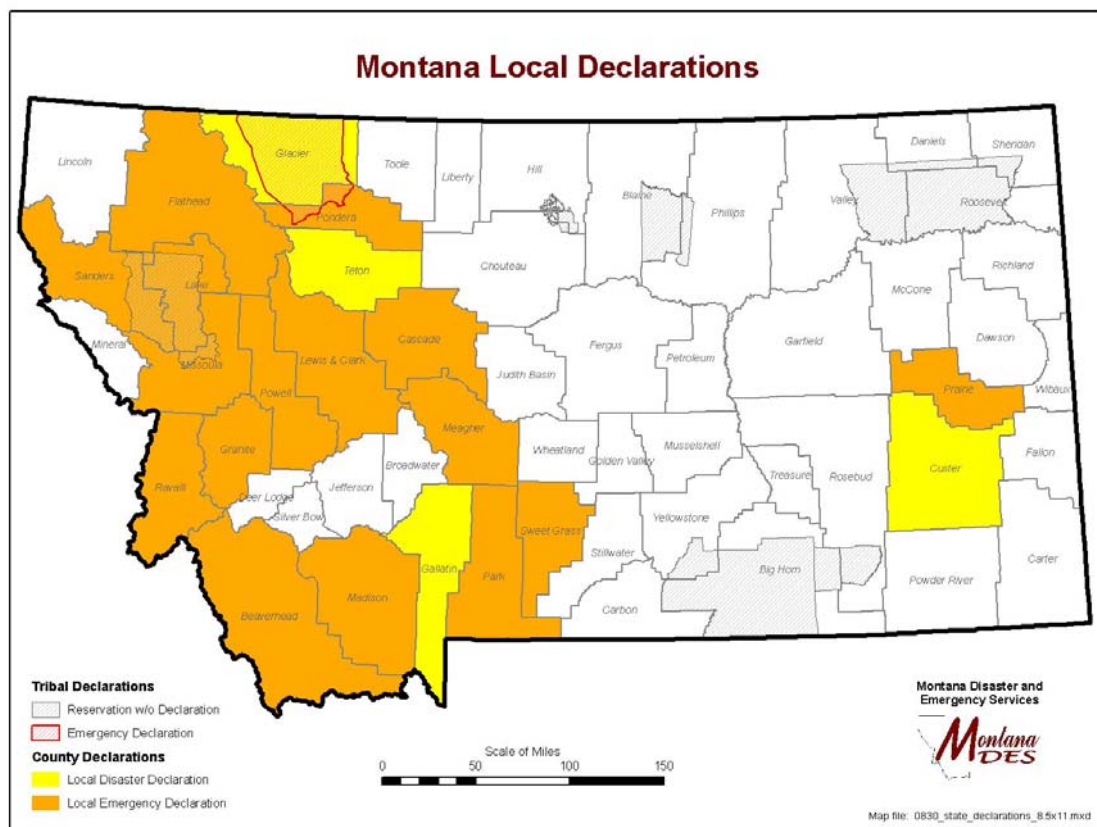
**Weather Forecast** For current Fire Weather Predictions, see the Daily Outlook at:  
[http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily\\_outlook.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/daily_outlook.pdf)

**Fire Behavior Forecast** For current Fire Behavior Predictions, see:  
[http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire\\_behavior/fire\\_behavior.pdf](http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/fire_behavior/fire_behavior.pdf)

#### IV. **State Declarations**

- Statewide Disaster Declaration (effective 8/25/07) due to continuing Wildland Fires.

#### V. **Local and Tribal Declarations**



- **State of Emergency.** The following jurisdictions have declared a state of emergency:

Lewis and Clark  
Lake  
Cascade  
Flathead  
Prairie  
Pondera  
Sweet Grass  
Madison  
Powell

Ravalli  
Granite  
Missoula  
Sanders  
Beaverhead  
Blackfoot Nation  
Park  
Meagher

- **Disaster Declaration.** The following jurisdictions have declared a wildfire disaster:

Teton  
Glacier

Gallatin  
Custer

#### **VI. Jurisdictional Emergency Operations**

No local government or tribal government EOC's are open.

#### **VI. Requests for State Financial Assistance**

- N/A

#### **VIII. Fire Management Assistance Grants**

- Jocko Lakes FEMA-2718FM-MT approved 8/4/07
- Black Cat FEMA-2721FM-MT approved 8/16/07
- Ford Road FEMA-2723FM-MT approved 8/19/07

#### **IX. Emergency Management Assistance Compact Resources Committed**

- EMAC A-Team is assigned to the MT State Emergency Coordination Center.
- Two HEMTT aviation refuelers from Colorado National Guard are deployed to support the Montana Army National Guard. The HEMTT's are scheduled for demobilization and return to Colorado on 9/4.

#### **X. Summary of State Resources Committed (through the SECC)**

- Montana National Guard Security Teams are currently assigned to:
  - Ahorn Fire
  - Sawmill Complex (2 teams)
  - Jocko Lake
  - Fool Creek Fire
- Montana Highway Patrol resources are assigned (as requested) to assist in traffic control and law enforcement support of large fires.
- The SECC is currently staffed and activated to a Level III status with extended hours, seven days a week. Outside of those hours, the MT DES staff Duty Officer is available 24 hrs and may be reached at (406) 841-3911.
- **Effective 8/31/07 at close of business the SECC will return to a Level II status with limited staffing to support the remaining National Guard resources that are deployed.**